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SUBJECT Struggle for Leadership of Liberal Party

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1. One of the first to try to take the place of Jorge Eliecer Gaitan as leader of the Liberal Party of Colombia and candidate of that Party for the Presidency in 1950 was Carlos H. Pareja, who began his campaign while still in prison. Regular leaders of the Liberal Party are opposed to Pareja whom they do not consider a Liberal because he was originally active in the Conservative Party. This enmity has been particularly noticeable on the part of Jorge Uribe Marquez, a leftist Liberal, who also hopes to be the Party candidate for President. Pareja is not, however, considered a serious threat, as his supporters constitute only a small minority of the Liberal masses.
2. Diego Montana Cuellar's announcement of his intention to enter active politics further diminishes Pareja's chances of obtaining the Liberal nomination. Montana Cuellar is making a strong bid for the support of the working classes. An ex-Army captain, Jose Phillips Rincon, who is working with Pareja, is reported to have approached Montana Cuellar in the hopes of effecting a coalition of their forces. Montana Cuellar refused to cooperate, and stated that he would work solely within the Gaitanist-Liberal movement in the campaign for the June 1949 elections. It is reported that the Liberal Party Directorate considers Montana Cuellar to have a great deal of influence in the Party and is favorably inclined toward him, particularly since he has indicated that he has no intention of creating a dissident movement within the Party.

Comment. It is of interest that both Pareja and Montana Cuellar at one time have been active in the Communist Party in Colombia, but no mention has been made of this by those opposed to Pareja.

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